

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application Serial No. 09/981,743
Attorney Docket No. Q66747

REMARKS

Claims 21-29 are all the claims pending in the application. Presently, claims 21, 25 and 29 are amended. No new matter is presented. Applicant notes that claims 25 and 29 are amended merely to correct for typographical errors.

Initially, Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with respect to dependent claims 24, 25, 26, 28 and 29, which are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Regarding the outstanding rejections, claims 21-23 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reimer et al. (EP 1014427, hereinafter "Reimer") in view of Curwen (U.S. Patent No. 4,360,087). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 21 defines an apparatus for conditioning the atmosphere in a vacuum chamber which requires, *inter alia*, a vacuum line including the vacuum chamber and comprising a pumping apparatus including at least a primary pump, and isolation means comprising an isolation enclosure enclosing the primary pump enabling the disturbance caused by the pumping apparatus to the vacuum chamber to be reduced. Notwithstanding the Examiner's rejection of claim 21, Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of Reimer and Curwen fails to teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 21.

For instance, the Examiner concedes that Reimer fails to disclose isolation means, as previously presented. Further, the Examiner contends that Curwen teaches,

“...an isolation means such as the outlet pipe 34 acting as a sensor to detect vibrations generated by the compressor, and a vibration generating element at weight 38 which generates vibrations, opposite in phase to vibrations generated by the pump, for the purpose of reducing or isolating the remainder of the system from vibrations generated by the pump.”

See Office Action of May 12, 2005 at page 3.

However, the teaching of Curwen describes a vibration isolation system including a frame for supporting a machine (i.e., compressor assembly 20) relative to ground, the frame comprising an outer casing 10 enclosing the machine 20 (*See* Curwen at col. 4, lines 34-36 and claim 8). Further, the vibration isolation means comprise a resilient conduit acting as a suspension system, such as a helical discharge tube 34 (*See* Curwen at col. 4, lines 51-56), which is coupled between the machine and a base, such as the casing 10, and a counterbalance mass 38 positioned on the resilient conduit (*See, e.g.*, claim 9 of Curwen).

Thus, in stark contrast to the claimed invention, Curwen's system suffers from the disadvantage of the large volume required by the resilient circuit and the mass. For instance, as depicted in Figure 3 of Curwen, the discharge tube 34 and the counterbalance mass 38 are disposed between the compressor assembly 20 and the casing 10. However, such a large volume as required by Curwen does not allow the machine to be located near the process chamber, as in the present invention. (*See, e.g.*, Specification at pages 2-4).

On the contrary, the isolation system according to the present invention includes an isolation enclosure, such that there is no wide space required between the pump and the enclosure. Moreover, Curwen fails to teach or suggest the use of an isolation enclosure as an

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isolation means in a vibration isolation system. As a consequence, neither Reimer or Curwen, whether taken alone or in combination teaches at least the limitation of the isolation means comprising an isolation enclosure enclosing the primary pump enabling the disturbance caused by the pumping apparatus to the vacuum chamber to be reduced.

Accordingly, even assuming, for the sake of argument, that the Examiner's asserted motivation to combine Reimer and Curwen is proper, the combination fails to teach all the claim limitations recited in claim 21. Thus, allowance of claim 21 is requested. Further, Applicant submits that claims 22-29 are allowable at least by virtue of depending from claim 21, and allowance of these claims is therefore requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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